

## Vincent's Summer ELA Assignment For Rising 7th Graders, 2016-17

**Due Monday, 9/12/16**

**1. READING (Complete both a & b)**

- a. Finish reading one book from the list of seven recommended nonfiction titles
- b. Finish reading one book from the list of twelve recommended fiction titles

**2. PROJECT OPTIONS (For each book that you read, complete a project from the six options listed below. Do not repeat a project you've already completed.)**

- a. Translate the entire book or three consecutive chapters into comic book form. Your completed project should contain between six to twelve panels. In addition, you must include captions for each panel: either quoting key phrases word-for-word, or paraphrasing sentences in your own words.
- b. Translate the entire book or three consecutive chapters into a *rhyming* poem or song lyrics. Bonus: record your song or recitation of the poem.
- c. Draft a short skit that illustrates a key theme or important idea based on the book you read. Your skit should be at least two-pages long (either 2 one-sided pages, or 1 double-sided page) and must include dialogue between or among characters, as well as stage directions in parentheses.
- d. Film in video format a short skit that illustrates a key theme or important idea based on the book you read. Your skit should be between three (3) to five (5) minutes long.
- e. Compose a letter to the author of the book you read, discussing (1) a key question that you have about the book, (2) what the writer did well, and (3) suggestions for how the writer could improve the book further. Your letter should contain at least five paragraphs.
- f. Like a set designer for a movie, use model clay, paper mache or other craft tools to construct a 3D model of a major scene where **mood** (the atmosphere or vibe; how readers feel when they read that scene) plays an important role in the story. Your 3D model should focus specifically on the setting, but can include characters (in action) as well. For your convenience, you have the option of photographing or filming your completed models instead of bringing in the actual models

**3. Any questions, please email [Zela.trcs@gmail.com](mailto:Zela.trcs@gmail.com) before August 1, 2016.**

## Recommended Nonfiction (Choose 1 out of 7)

### **1. *Brown Girl Dreaming***, written by Jacqueline Woodson

57+ copies available through the Queens Library System. Lexile Measure = 990

This rich and nuanced memoir in verse captures the tenor of the times and the specifics of Woodson's family roots in Ohio, the Deep South, and in Brooklyn, New York. The poems tie together the author's personal experiences, shared memories, and understanding of the past to tease out the many forces and influences that contributed to her becoming a writer. An accessible and engaging tour de force.

### **2. *On Two Feet and Wings***, written by Abbas Kazerooni

2 copies available through the Queens Library System. Lexile Measure = 650

Abbas and his mother are about to board a plane for Turkey when authorities order her to remain in post-Revolution Iran with his father, Karim; Abbas, at Karim's insistence, flies alone to Istanbul to stay and apply for a British visa—he is 9. Abbas doesn't speak Turkish; a promised helper fails him; the fleabag hotel he's deposited in is in a dangerous neighborhood. Here, everyone's a stranger. Abbas must learn to tell friend from foe. Abbas' anguish and fear, his repeatedly dashed hopes are wrenching. Yet whether he's crushed or elated, the story itself is uplifting. Readers are often promised unforgettable protagonists—this memoir delivers one.

### **3. *When I Was Puerto Rican: A Memoir***, written by Esmeralda Santiago

36+ copies available through the Queens Library System. Lexile Measure = 1020

In this personal and deep reflection on her childhood, the author showcases historical and emotional vignettes of a life between two countries. Young readers will get a solid coming-of-age tale of growing up bicultural and the joys and pains found through that journey. A memoir-in-verse that gently intertwines a love letter to Cuba and life, family, and memories attached to the island.

### **4. *The Octopus Scientists: Exploring the Mind of a Mollusk***, written by Sy Montgomery.

37+ Copies available through the Queens Library System. Lexile Measure = 1020

An international team of scientists with varied focuses work together on a remote South Pacific island to study octopus behaviors. Montgomery weaves a narrative full of fascinating detail, helpful comparisons, direct quotations, and personal reactions that bring readers into the experience. Chapters of action, with smoothly integrated explanatory background, are interspersed with informative passages about octopuses, the field station, and coral reefs. Science in the field at its best.

### **5. *Angel Island: Gateway to Gold Mountain***, written by Russell Freedman.

34+ copies available through the Queens Library; Lexile Measure = 1140

Newbery Medal winner Freedman explores a lesser-known period in U.S. immigration history, when the Angel Island Immigration Station, often called the Ellis Island of the West, served as the primary gateway to the Pacific Coast between 1910 and 1940. Over half a million people from more than 80 different countries were processed there, the majority of them from China. In telling the history of Chinese people in the U.S., the author doesn't hold back on the racial discrimination these immigrants faced. As immigration continues to be a major issue in America, this introduction to the Angel Island experience is overdue and, most of all, welcome.

### **6. *Treasury of Egyptian Mythology: Classic Stories of Gods, Goddesses, Monsters and Mortals***, written by Donna Jo Napoli

24+ copies available through the Queens Library System. Lexile Measure = 860

Napoli challenges readers to regard the old gods in new ways. The author provocatively explores the thesis that ancient Egyptian worship could be considered monotheistic, considering how closely intertwined the culture's gods were in origins and natures. She introduces 17 major deities and a handful of minor ones in a mix of equally lively stories and exposition, beginning with Ra's self-creation from the unchanging ("Boring, really") waters of Nun. A final chapter introduces Imhotep, architect of the first pyramid, who was born human but later deified. Sumptuous of format, magisterial of content, stimulating for heart and mind both.

### **7. *The Impossible Rescue: The True Story of An Amazing Arctic Adventure***, written by Martin Sandler.

13 copies available through the Queens Library System. Lexile Measure = 1270

Sandler brings to life an extraordinary true adventure tale set on the treacherous Arctic terrain. In September 1897, eight whaling vessels became icebound near Point Barrow, Alaska, the northernmost point in America, and 265 men faced starvation. Acting on orders from President McKinley, Secretary of the Treasury Lyman Gage sent Capt. Francis Tuttle and his ship, the Bear, on a rescue mission. Remarkable photographs, many taken by one of the rescuing officers, grace just about every spread, and even the captions are fascinating. The narrative's excitement is heightened by the words of the participants, drawn from their actual letters, diaries, journals and other personal reminiscences. Maps are well-drawn, documentation is meticulous, and the backmatter includes a section on what happened to the key players and a useful timeline. Outstanding nonfiction writing that makes history come alive.

## Recommended Fiction (Choose 1 out of 12)

### 1) *Fort*, written by Cynthia DeFelice

7 copies available through the Queens Library System. Lexile Measure = 700

What preteen boy wouldn't love to build a fort in the woods? Wyatt, on summer vacation in upstate New York with his dad, and Augie, who lives there all year round with his grandmother, hatch a plan to build a fort in the woods. Augie, something of a modern-day Huckleberry Finn, has ample talent as a woodsman. The very real threat from bullies J.R. and Morrie, and their abuse of mentally disabled Gerard, a good-natured neighborhood kid, provide the impetus for Operation Doom. That plan to defend the fort and protect Gerard (and even provide some justice) leads to a glorious, feel-good climax in which all the right things work out and the bad guys get their richly deserved comeuppance. Upbeat, engaging and satisfying; altogether a very fine book, especially for boys looking for a bit of believable, achievable adventure.

### 2) *School for Sidekicks*, written by Kelly McCullough

8 copies available through the Queens Library System. Lexile Measure = 850

Evan Quick has spent his whole life dreaming of becoming a hero. Every morning he wakes up and runs through a checklist of test to see if he's developed powers over night, and every day it is the same thing -- nothing. No flying, no super strength, no heat rays or cold beams. And now, he's finally ready to give up. But then, the class field trip to the Mask Museum is interrupted by a super villain attack, and Evan somehow manages to survive a death ray. Even better, Evan's favorite Mask, Captain Commanding, shows up to save them all -- and when things go very wrong, it's Evan who finds the strength to come to Captain Commanding's rescue.

### 3) *Goodbye Stranger*, written by Rebecca Stead.

25+ copies available through the Queens Library System. Lexile Measure = 560

Bridge finds herself growing apart from her best friends, Sherm writes letters to a now-absent grandfather whom he desperately misses, and, unable to face a day at school, an unnamed girl roams the streets. Displaying an intuitive understanding of the fraught period between childhood and adolescence, Stead deftly blends multiple threads and perspectives to tell a quirky and tender coming-of-age story laced with themes of gender, identity, loss, and the complexity of friendship.

### 4) *Never Always Sometimes*, written by Adi Alsaid.

12 copies available through the Queens Library System. Lexile Measure =

Two best friends discover love during their last few months of high school. Dave and Julia have always been thick as thieves. Before starting high school, the pair concocted a list of things they promised to never do in order to fight becoming high school clichés. Now it's the end of their senior year, and Julia has decided to take out the Nevers list and break the rules, one at a time. Meanwhile, Dave has decided to set aside his longtime crush on Julia and date the sporty Gretchen. Sparks fly, hearts are broken, and love is found in this charming rose-colored depiction of the last few months of school. A good romance is hard to come by. This is a great one.

### 5) *Echo*, written by Pam Munoz Ryan.

45+ copies available through the Queens Library System. Lexile Measure = 680

Music, magic, and a real-life miracle meld in this genre-defying story. Lost and alone in a forbidden forest, Otto meets three mysterious sisters and suddenly finds himself entwined in a puzzling quest involving a prophecy, a promise, and a harmonica. Decades later, Friedrich in Germany, Mike in Pennsylvania, and Ivy in California each, in turn, become interwoven when the very same harmonica lands in their lives. All the children face daunting challenges: rescuing a father, protecting a brother, holding a family together. And ultimately, pulled by the invisible thread of destiny, their suspenseful solo stories converge in an orchestral crescendo. Richly imagined and masterfully crafted.

### 6) *The Boundless*, written by Kenneth Oppel

15+ copies available through the Queens Library System. Lexile Measure = 730

All aboard for an action-packed escapade. The Boundless, the greatest train ever built, is on its maiden voyage across the country, and first-class passenger Will Everett is about to embark on the adventure of his life! When Will ends up in possession of the key to a train car containing priceless treasures, he becomes the target of sinister figures from his past. In order to survive, Will must join a traveling circus, enlisting the aid of Mr. Dorian, the ringmaster and leader of the troupe, and Maren, a girl his age who is an expert escape artist. With villains fast on their heels, can Will and Maren reach Will's father and save The Boundless before someone winds up dead?

**7) *Caminar***, written by Skila Brown

10 copies available through the Queens Library System.

Set in 1981 Guatemala, a lyrical debut novel tells the powerful tale of a boy who must decide what it means to be a man during a time of war. Carlos knows that when the soldiers arrive with warnings about the Communist rebels, it is time to be a man and defend the village, keep everyone safe. But Mama tells him not yet -- he's still her quiet moonfaced boy. The soldiers laugh at the villagers, and before they move on, a neighbor is found dangling from a tree, a sign on his neck: Communist. Mama tells Carlos to run and hide, then try to find her. . . . Numb and alone, he must join a band of guerillas as they trek to the top of the mountain where Carlos's abuela lives. Will he be in time, and brave enough, to warn them about the soldiers? What will he do then? A novel in verse inspired by actual events during Guatemala's civil war, *Caminar* is the moving story of a boy who loses nearly everything before discovering who he really is.

**8) *The Crossover***, written by Kwame Alexander

54+ copies available through the Queens Library System. Lexile Measure = 750

2015 Newbery Medal Winner 2015 Coretta Scott King Honor Award Winner "With a bolt of lightning on my kicks . . . The court is SIZZLING. My sweat is DRIZZLING. Stop all that quivering. Cuz tonight I'm delivering," announces dread-locked, 12-year old Josh Bell. He and his twin brother Jordan are awesome on the court. But Josh has more than basketball in his blood, he's got mad beats, too, that tell his family's story in verse, in this fast and furious middle grade novel of family and brotherhood from Kwame Alexander (*He Said, She Said* 2013). Josh and Jordan must come to grips with growing up on and off the court to realize breaking the rules comes at a terrible price, as their story's heart-stopping climax proves a game-changer for the entire family.

**9) *Cuckoo Song***, written by Frances Hardinge

5 copies available through the Queens Library System. Lexile Measure = 860

When Triss wakes up after an accident, she knows something is very wrong. She is insatiably hungry, her sister seems scared of her, and her parents whisper behind closed doors. She looks through her diary to try to remember, but the pages have been ripped out. Soon Triss discovers that what happened to her is more strange and terrible than she could ever have imagined, and that she is quite literally not herself. In a quest to find the truth she must travel into the terrifying underbelly of the city to meet a twisted architect who has dark designs on her family--before it's too late . . . Set in England after World War I, this is a brilliantly creepy but ultimately loving story of the relationship between two sisters who have to band together against a world where nothing is as it seems.

**10) *Far Far Away***, written by Tom McNeal

35 copies available through the Queens Library System. Lexile Measure = 790

Jeremy Johnson Johnson hears voices. Or, specifically, one voice: the ghost of Jacob Grimm, one half of The Brothers Grimm. Jacob watches over Jeremy, protecting him from an unknown dark evil whispered about in the space between this world and the next. But Jacob can't protect Jeremy from everything. When coltish, copper-haired Ginger Boultinghouse takes a bite of a cake so delicious it's rumored to be bewitched, she falls in love with the first person she sees: Jeremy. In any other place, this would be a turn for the better for Jeremy, but not in Never Better, where the Finder of Occasions--whose identity and evil intentions nobody knows--is watching and waiting, waiting and watching. . . And as anyone familiar with the Brothers Grimm know, not all fairy tales have happy endings. Veteran writer Tom McNeal has crafted a young adult novel at once grim(m) and hopeful, full of twists, and perfect for fans of contemporary fairy tales.

**11) *The Thing About Luck***, written by Cynthia Kadohata

28 copies available through the Queens Library System. Lexile Measure = 700

There is bad luck, good luck, and making your own luck--which is exactly what Summer must do to save her family. Summer knows that kouun means "good luck" in Japanese, and this year her family has none of it. Just when she thinks nothing else can possibly go wrong, an emergency whisks her parents away to Japan--right before harvest season. Summer and her little brother, Jaz, are left in the care of their grandparents, who come out of retirement in order to harvest wheat and help pay the bills. The thing about Obaachan and Jiichan is that they are old-fashioned and demanding, and between helping Obaachan cook for the workers, covering for her when her back pain worsens, and worrying about her lonely little brother, Summer just barely has time to notice the attentions of their boss's cute son. But notice she does, and what begins as a welcome distraction from the hard work soon turns into a mess of its own. Cynthia Kadohata's ode to the breadbasket of America has received six starred reviews and was selected as a National Book Award Finalist.

**12) *Legend***, written by Marie Lu

50+ copies available through the Queens Library System. Lexile Measure = 710

What was once the western United States is now home to the Republic, a nation perpetually at war with its neighbors. Born into an elite family in one of the Republic's wealthiest districts, fifteen-year-old June is a prodigy being groomed for success in the Republic's highest military circles. Born into the slums, fifteen-year-old Day is the country's most wanted criminal. From very different worlds, June and Day have no reason to cross paths - until the day June's brother, Metias, is murdered and Day becomes the prime suspect. Caught in the ultimate game of cat and mouse, Day is in a race for his family's survival, while June seeks to avenge Metias's death. But in a shocking turn of events, the two uncover the truth of what has really brought them together, and the sinister lengths their country will go to keep its secrets. Full of nonstop action, suspense, and romance...